



## Update From Senator Cornyn

June 2005

During the month of May, the Senate continued to make progress on the legislative agenda for the first session of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. This month there was an important development in the judicial confirmation process – after four long years, Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen was **finally confirmed** to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit, and two of her fellow nominees now await up-or-down votes. The Senate also passed a bipartisan bill of which I am an original co-sponsor – *The State Criminal Alien Assistance Program Reauthorization Act of 2005 (SCAAP)*. This bill would help ease the financial burden placed on states like Texas whose costs for incarcerating undocumented immigrants charged with crimes are significantly higher than federal funding levels.

In June the Senate will likely turn its attention to the defense authorization bill that would support our homeland security efforts and ensure our troops the necessary resources to fight and win the war on terror. We will also likely consider highway legislation, attempting to provide continued resources for critical transportation infrastructure, and I'll continue pushing for Texas to get its fair share of funding. As always, I appreciate hearing from you so that I may continue to address the issues that matter most to Texans.

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238198>

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238388>

### The Judicial Confirmation Process: Texas Justice Confirmed

More than four years ago, President Bush nominated Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit. After four years of enduring harsh, false attacks, and an unprecedented effort to impose a supermajority vote requirement to confirm judges, the **Senate finally confirmed this brilliant jurist** and fine Texan to the federal bench.

As many of you may know, 14 Senators brokered a **deal** that would afford Justice Owen and two other nominees up-or-down votes, and the agreement states they would only filibuster judicial nominees under “extraordinary circumstances.” I was not a party to this deal. I firmly believe we should restore the 214-year Senate tradition of majority vote on judicial nominations. However, though this deal is disappointing, it does keep **all options open – including use of the “Byrd option” or Constitutional option** – for solving the filibuster problem in the future, should it arise again. Moreover, under the precedent set with the vote to confirm Justice Owen, debates over judicial philosophy and disagreements about past rulings are not justification for the use of a filibuster. **Hopefully we have seen the end of this unprecedented tactic.**

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238131>

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238096>

[http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record\\_jc.cfm?id=238374](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record_jc.cfm?id=238374)

[http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record\\_jc.cfm?id=238100](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record_jc.cfm?id=238100)

### Supporting Texas Military Throughout the BRAC Process

The Department of Defense on May 13 announced their long-awaited recommendations in the **Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)** process. While I am deeply concerned about the decision to recommend closure and realignment of several military installations across our state, the affected communities will soon have the opportunity to voice their concerns before the independent BRAC Commission in a number of community hearings– to give additional information that can influence what final recommendations are sent to the President.

It is critical that our nation's military has the appropriate infrastructure and support for our troops, and I believe that all Texas military installations play a vital role in our nation's defense. And yet several installations key to our ongoing military operations, including Brooks City Base, Naval Station Ingleside, Sheppard Air Force Base, Lonestar Army Ammunition Depot, and Red River Army Depot – appear among the installations recommended for closure or realignment. These bases should remain an integral part of our military long into the future.

Undoubtedly this announcement has real consequences for military families and the communities that support them throughout Texas. I will continue to work closely with BRAC Commission chairman Anthony Principi, top military officials, and the affected communities to ensure the independent commission receives all the necessary information to evaluate the Department of Defense recommendations, and will continue to make the best case possible for the preservation of our military installations.

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238103>

### **Working for Texans**

Following release of the Department of Defense BRAC list, I traveled across the state to meet with local officials and concerned citizens in the communities that are most immediately affected, to discuss the next step in making our case to the independent BRAC Commission. These conversations proved to be productive, and I will continue working closely with these communities to make sure that the Commission receives all the necessary information as it evaluates the Pentagon's recommendations.

Meanwhile, in an effort to speed highway funding to improve West Texas transportation, I have introduced legislation that would designate the **La Entrada al Pacifico Corridor** as a "high priority" corridor on the National Highway System. This will assist West Texas in keeping its transportation infrastructure up to date, to meet the rapid growth that has occurred in the past several years. When complete, the La Entrada corridor will bring not only new jobs and economic growth to the region, but it will also increase the safety of families and drivers.

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238383>

### **Protecting our Homeland**

We must guard the places across our nation where terrorists may strike, and where such attacks could do the most damage to our people, our government, and our national economy. To that end, earlier this month I, along with my colleague Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), introduced S. 1013, the **FORWARD Funding Act of 2005**. This legislation would ensure that homeland security grant funds are sent to places where the threat of terrorist attack is greatest. It would allow us to more effectively protect our most vulnerable population centers, and the critical infrastructure and vital components of our economy.

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238382>

### **Protecting our Border and Evaluating Immigration Policy**

As chairman of the Immigration, Border Security and Citizenship subcommittee, I am continuing to conduct an extensive evaluation of our broken immigration system and the nation's border and homeland security situation. As part of that ongoing effort, this month I co-chaired the **fourth** and **fifth** hearings in an ongoing series. The goals of these hearings are to determine which challenges facing our broken immigration system can be solved with more resources or additional legal tools, and which require more fundamental and comprehensive reforms to current immigration law and other domestic policy.

I continue to work with my colleague Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) on **immigration reform legislation**. This month we announced the **enforcement provisions** of our proposed legislation - and together we soon will introduce and describe in detail our proposal that will dramatically strengthen enforcement, bolster border security, and comprehensively reform our immigration laws. I welcome your comments regarding this important issue.

For more information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=237741>

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=238311&ref=home>

[http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/doc\\_archive/Enforcement.pdf](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/doc_archive/Enforcement.pdf)

[http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/doc\\_archive/Enforcement\\_section-by-section.pdf](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/doc_archive/Enforcement_section-by-section.pdf)

### **Come See Me**

If you're traveling to Washington for business or pleasure, I would greatly appreciate the chance to say hello while you're here. I host an open house in my office, Hart Senate Office Building, Room 625, from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. every Tuesday when the Senate is in session, so I can greet and talk with Texans. Please call Denise Pleasant, in my office, at (202) 224-2934 to let me know you'll be coming.

Best regards,

Senator John Cornyn

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